

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 L-03 IO-12

RSR-01 /112 W

----- 034880

R 241502 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2126

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 645

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CT, FR

SUBJECT: BOKASSA CRITICIZES FRENCH

1. AT CEREMONY MAY 23 TURNING OVER GIFT OF RUMANIAN MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO CAR, PRESIDENT BOKASSA PRECEDED STANDARD PREPARED SPEECH WITH STRONGLY- WORDED EXTEMPORANEOUS (BUT OBVIOUSLY PREMEDITATED) ATTACK ON FRENCH IN CAR. HE NOTED " A CERTAIN EMBASSY" WHICH PROMOTES SUBVERSION BY ENCOURAGING CERTAIN CENTRAL AFRICANS TO GET RID OF HIM AND WHICH WANTS TO SET UP " SHADOW GOVERNMENT" OF ITS OWN TECHNICIANS, ETC., IN CAR. HE WARNED THAT IF SUCH ACTIVITY CONTINUED HE WOULD ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE TO " THROW STONES" AS THEY DID BEFORE (I. E. ANTI- FRENCH RIOT IN SEPTEMBER 1971). HE CITED RECENT SOVIET AID TO UNIVERSITY AND CURRENT RUMANIAN GIFT AS EVIDENCE OF " REAL" COOPERATION, IN CONTRAST TO " POISON" GIVEN BY THOSE HE WAS NOW CRITICIZING.

2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH BOKASSA DID NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTION FRENCH, THERE WAS NO QUESTION HE WAS REFERRING TO THEM. TONE AND LANGUAGE OF REMARKS WERE QUITE STRONG, AND HE WAS OBVIOUSLY DETERMINED TO USE OCCASION FOR THIS SPECIFIC PURPOSE.

3. BOKASSA HAD IN FACT PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED " FOREIGNERS" AS BEING INVOLVED IN RECENT ALLEGED PLOT AGAINST HIM, AND HE EXPELLED FOUR

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FRENCH MILITARY ADVISORS IN MID- APRIL. HE HAD EVEN PUBLICLY CITED FRENCH " TECHNICIANS" IN THIS CONTEXT. BUT THIS IS FIRST TIME HE HAS ZEROED IN ON EMBASSY ITSELF AND MADE SUCH CLEAR THREAT OF VIOLENCE.

4. WHILE BOKASSA CONTINUED TO PROFESS GOOD OVERALL RAPPORT WITH FRANCE, LOCAL FRENCH- CAR RELATIONS ARE OBVIOUSLY STRAINED. IN ADDITION TO SUSPICION THAT FRENCH MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN M' BONGO' S " PLOT" AGAINST HIM, BOKASSA MAY BE REACTING TO WHAT HE MAY HAVE HEARD OF GROWING CRITICISM OF HIM BY SOME FRENCHMEN HERE, PARTICULARLY OF HIS GOVERNMENT' S FINANCIAL SITUATION. THESE LATEST REMARKS WILL, OF COURSE, NOT HELP MATTERS.

5. BOKASSA HAS NOW DEPARTED FOR ADDIS ABABA AND SITUATION LIKELY TO REMAIN QUIET DURING HIS ABSENCE. HOWEVER, IT WILL BEAR CLOSE WATCHING OVER NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, PARTICULARLY AFTER HIS RETURN. AFTER OAU SUMMIT BOKASSA REPORTEDLY INTENDS TO VISIT FRANCE BEFORE RETURNING TO BANGUI.
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